



Fightback

Struggle, Solidarity, Socialism

THE
**CLIMATE
CRISIS**
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Fightback magazine is now in its 20th year as we continue the long-term fight for socialism. Readers and supporters may consider remembering us in their will with assets or money that will help the struggle in the long-term. If this is you please put in your will 'Fightback, PO Box 10-282, Dominion Road, Auckland 1446 as well as what you would like to leave to us.

Editorial

Fightback (Aotearoa / New Zealand) is an ecosocialist, socialist-feminist group that publishes a regular magazine. In 2015, Fightback stepped back from our monthly printing schedule towards less regular, themed issues; an issue on the **Housing Crisis**; on the fight for **Secure Hours** and a **Living Wage**; a successful crowdfunded issue dedicated to paid writing by **Women and Gender Minorities**; an issue dedicated to **Internationalism**, and finally the issue you hold in your hands, on the **Climate Crisis**.

The 2015 UN Climate Change Conference will be held from November 30th to December 11th in Paris. As argued in the following pages (see particularly *Change Everything: Climate Justice Post-Paris*, p17-18), these talks are unlikely to change anything. Any commitments are likely to be non-binding, framed by the market logic that produced the climate crisis, and to benefit the global rich at the expense of the global poor.

NGO 350.org has nonetheless initiated a global People's Climate March in advance of the talks. Fightback is a partner in the Aotearoa / New Zealand section of this march, to be held on November 28th in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and smaller centres across the country (see <http://www.peoplesclimatemarch.org.nz/events>).

We participate to promote radical solutions that go beyond pressure on existing powers (necessary but inadequate), towards asserting the power of self-organised communities.

Our first article, by Bronwen Beechey, explains the theory and practice of ecosocialism (p4-7). Two international articles cover ecological struggles: a reprinted article from Green Left Weekly reports on a recent climate change conference held in Bolivia (p8-9), and Jojo, a Fightback correspondent based in Germany, outlines actions against coal mining (p10-11). Daphne Lawless reviews Naomi Klein's recent book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*, and relates Klein's argument to Aotearoa / New Zealand (p12-16). Michelle Ducat (Oil Free Wellington) outlines the limits of the Paris talks, and Oil Free Wellington's plans for education and direct action in December (p17-18). The issue concludes with a poem by Tam Vosper (p19).

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Fightback

Struggle, Solidarity, Socialism

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Coordinating Editor

Ian Anderson

Proofing

Bronwen Beechey

Layout

Michael Durey

Assisting Editors

Bronwen Beechey, Sionainn Byrnes,
Thomas Roud, Daphne Lawless

About Fightback

Under our current system, democracy consists of a vote every 3 years. Most of our lives are lived under dictatorship, the dictatorship of bosses and WINZ case managers. Fightback stands for a system in which our workplaces, our schools, our universities are run democratically, for social need rather than private profit.

Fightback participates in the MANA Movement, whose stated mission is to bring "rangatiratanga to the poor, the powerless and the dispossessed." Capitalism was imposed in Aotearoa through colonisation, and the fight for indigenous self-determination is intimately connected with the fight for an egalitarian society. We also maintain an independent Marxist organisation outside of parliament, to offer a vision of a world beyond the parliamentary capitalist system.

Fightback stands against all forms of oppression. We believe working-class power, the struggle of the majority for self-determination, is the basis for ending all forms of oppression. However, we also recognise that daily inequities such as sexism must be addressed here and now, not just after the revolution.

Fightback is embedded in a range of struggles on the ground; including building a fighting trade union movement, movements for gender and sexual liberation, and anti-racism.

Fightback also publishes a monthly magazine, and a website, to offer a socialist perspective on ongoing struggles.

Fightback stands for struggle, solidarity and socialism.

"No socialism on a dead planet":

Ecosocialism, an overview

By Bronwen Beechey – from notes made for a talk to the Fightback Capitalism: Not Our Future conference, Wellington, NZ, June 2014

Why ecosocialism? For most socialists the reasons are pretty obvious. To quote Alexandre Costa, a Marxist and Professor of Atmospheric Science in Brazil:

"We insist that seeking answers to the central question of the ecological crisis in general (and in particular the climate crisis) is crucial to the struggle of the working classes and the poor in the 21st century. After all, the fight to avoid a catastrophic outcome to this crisis engendered by capitalism is the fight to safeguard the material conditions for survival with dignity of humankind. ... Socialism is not possible on a scorched Earth."

However, not all socialists are convinced by this, and it would be fair to say that many environmental activists are suspicious of socialism, with some justification. It has become obvious to many that neo-liberal capitalism and environmental destruction go hand in hand. But the mainstream environmental movement, and most Green parties, including New Zealand's, are only challenging the worst aspects of capitalism, believing that some form of "greening" capitalism is possible. Ecosocialism has developed as an alternative to the mainstream environmental movement's emphasis on "greenwashing", middle-class consumer activism and acceptance of the profit motive.

The stakes couldn't be higher. While we bicker, the global environment is in crisis. It has been reported that according to two independent studies by climate scientists, the West Antarctic Ice Sheet is losing twice as much ice now as the last time it was surveyed, and its collapse may now be irreversible. This would cause a sea level rise of three metres. This

is a climate tipping point – a critical point in the Earth's system that when crossed, will mean the climate can spiral out of control, beyond the point of no return. This doesn't mean it is all over. It does mean we have irreversibly and dangerously changed the climate, and that we, and future generations, will live with the consequences.

Marx and Engels: green before it was cool

Ecosocialism is not so much a revision of Marxist theory as a reinstatement of elements that have previously been downplayed or ignored. In the words of British ecosocialist Derek Wall, "unlike 20th century interpretations of socialism, ecosocialism places Marx at the centre of its analysis."

While Karl Marx and his collaborator Frederick Engels are famous for their analysis of capitalism and call for social revolution, they are far less known for their ecological thinking, which held that capitalism inevitably tears apart the natural conditions that sustain life.

This can be seen from Engels' early concern with river pollution and his analysis in *The Condition of the English Working Class* of how industrial pollution harmed workers, right through to Marx's writings at the end of his life where he plunged into the study of indigenous societies.

Marx's two most important ecological insights were "the treadmill of production" and "the metabolic rift". The treadmill of production refers to capital's impulse to unlimited expansion, its relentless drive to increase profits, regardless of the ecosphere's natural limits.

In nature, there is no such thing as waste. Nature is a circular system where everything is recycled. This is the opposite of capitalism's linear, treadmill economy, which overloads natural systems with ever-growing amounts of waste products: waste gases into the sky,

waste pollutants into water, and waste chemicals and toxins into the soil.

The metabolic rift refers to Marx's theory that capitalist production for profit creates a sharp break in what Marx called the metabolism – the crucial interdependency of nature and human society. Marx arrived at this conclusion from his research into how industrial agriculture tended to reduce fertility, depriving the soil and the workers of nourishment and sustenance.

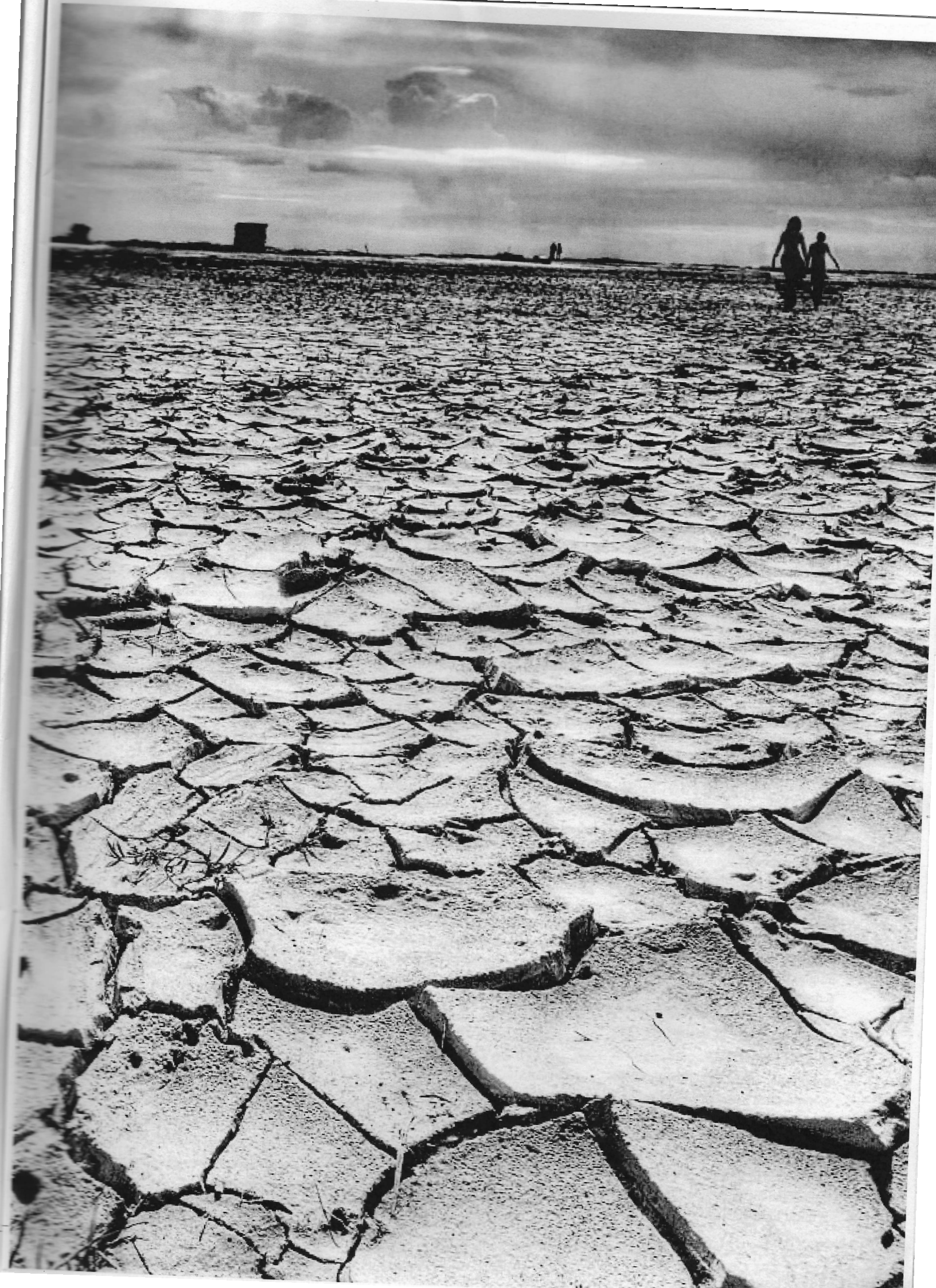
But Marx also understood the concept of the metabolic rift on a global scale, as colonies in the global South had their natural resources and soil fertility plundered to support Western capitalist development – an imperialist project that continues today.

Healing this rift and building a truly sustainable society was a central goal in Marx's vision of a democratic socialist future. In the third volume of *Capital* he said:

"Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the Earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations as *boni patres familias* [good heads of the household]."

Engels, in *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, said that capitalism helped destroy the natural world because "in relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the immediate, the most tangible result".

Another important concept of Marx's was that of democratic property rights, the commons. Communities, including indigenous and peasant farmers, have collectively regulated resources including land, forests and fisheries for thousands of years. Under capitalism,



these resources were seized for private ownership and exploited for profit, resulting in waste and destruction.

Derek Wall has written extensively about how the concept of "the commons" provides the basis for an alternative, ecological economy that is democratic, resource-efficient, decentralised and sustainable. He says:

"To me, ecosocialism is about defending, extending and deepening commons. Cyberspace is to a large extent commons. The wiki principle is commons. Collective, creative solutions are possible. While commons work at a community level, with the web we can nest commons and use wiki principles to democratically plan regional, national and international economies."

The movement and the problem today

However, it is with good reason that French Marxist Michael Lowy has said the "ecological question ... poses the major challenge to a renewal of Marxist thought". Typically, Marxists in the 20th century, even of the anti-Stalinist variety, held to a "productivist" vision of change, whereby increasing the level of the productive forces inherited from capitalism was considered the path to social progress. Technology was wrongly assumed to be class-neutral, rather than historically and socially determined.

This history makes the concept of ecosocialism doubly important. Canadian ecosocialist Ian Angus has said that "ecosocialism begins with a critique of its two parents, ecology and Marxism." It seeks to combine the best insights of ecology, which says human actions can undermine the basis of life, with Marxism's critique of capitalism – a system based on the dual exploitation of labour and nature.

Published in 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* is often hailed as the inspiration for the contemporary ecology and environmental movement. Carson's work demonstrated that synthetic pesticides widely used in agriculture could cause cancer and that their agricultural use was a threat to wildlife, particularly to birds.

Years after Carson's death in 1964, the use of DDT and other pesticides was banned in the US. The first Earth Day was held in the US in 1970. Since then, governments and international bodies have been forced to place environmental issues on their agendas.

In New Zealand, the modern environmental movement started in the late 1960's with the campaign to save Lake Manapouri, and continued with successful campaigns against nuclear power and visits by nuclear warships, preventing logging of native forests, and halting the growing of genetically engineered food crops. More recently, there have been campaigns against proposals to open up national parks to mining exploration and against deep sea oil. The New Zealand environmental movement was responsible for the formation of the Values Party, one of the first political parties to campaign on around environmental issues, and later the Green Party.

The environmental movement that grew in the late 1960s was part of the radicalisation of young people that included challenged many aspects of capitalism – war, racism, sexism and so on. Many of these activists became part of a growing socialist movement, and these young ecosocialists struggled against the regressive ideas which sometimes emerge in ecological thought.

For example, many of the writings that helped spur the early environmental movement, such as *The Limits to Growth* and *The Population Bomb*, saw population growth, particularly in underdeveloped countries, as the cause of environmental destruction. This argument has been around since Thomas Malthus published *An Essay on the Principles of Population* in 1798 and is one of the fundamental points of difference between ecosocialism and other forms of environmentalism. Barry Commoner's 1971 book, *The Closing Circle*, was a left-wing rebuttal of populationist arguments, arguing that capitalist technologies, rather than population pressures, were responsible for environmental degradation.

In 1979, Australian Marxist Alan Roberts published *The Self-Managing Environment*, which suggested that consumerism was fuelled by people's unfulfilled needs. Derek Wall, in an interview in 2011, credits this book as being his first introduction to ecosocialist ideas. A key development in the 1980s was the creation of the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* with the first issue in 1988, and still published today.

The 1990s saw two socialist feminists, Mary Mellor and Ariel Salleh, address environmental issues within an ecosocialist and feminist framework. Both posited a materialist form of ecofeminism which showed how women's unpaid reproductive and domestic labour was an essential part of maintaining capitalism, rather than idealist versions of ecofeminism which projected an essentialist view of women as being "closer to nature" due to their role as child bearers.

From the 1990s onward, ecosocialists engaged enthusiastically with the growing anti-globalisation movements of the global South, which later spread to the metropolitan centres of the North with mass protests at meetings of the World Trade Organisation, World Bank and IMF. These protests combined ecological awareness and social justice, focusing particularly on the effect of globalisation on the poor and workers.

In 2001, Joel Kovel, a social scientist, psychiatrist and former candidate for the US Green Party Presidential nomination in 2000, and Michael Löwy, an anthropologist and member of the Trotskyist Fourth International, released *An Ecosocialist Manifesto*, which has been adopted by some organisations and suggests possible routes for the growth of eco-socialist consciousness.

The manifesto states:

"We believe that the present capitalist system cannot regulate, much less overcome, the crises it has set going. It cannot solve the ecological crisis because to do so requires setting limits upon accumulation—an unacceptable option for a system predicated upon the rule: Grow or Die!"

In 2007, the Ecosocialist International Network was founded in Paris. The meeting attracted more than 60 activists from Europe, Latin America, the US, Canada, the UK and Australia. A committee was set up by the Paris conference to draft an ecosocialist declaration, which was signed by more than 400 individuals and organisations from around the world. It was distributed as part of the official launching of the Ecosocialist International Network at the World Social Forum in Belem, Brazil, in 2009.

The Belem Declaration, which issued from this conference, stated:

"Ecosocialism is grounded in a transformed economy founded on the non-monetary values of social justice and ecological balance. It criticizes both capitalist 'market ecology' and productivist socialism, which ignored the earth's equilibrium and limits. It redefines the path and goal of socialism within an ecological and democratic framework."

Here in NZ, ecosocialism was first adopted by Socialist Worker New Zealand. In 2009, the SW-NZ central committee collectively signed the Belem Declaration, and set up the Ecosocialism Aotearoa Facebook group. In 2010, an issue of SW's *UNITY* journal was dedicated to the theme of Ecosocialism, and in 2011 the organisation began the work of establishing a local Ecosocialist Network, just before it dissolved itself in 2012.

SW-NZ member Peter de Waal came up with the concept of the "PERIL syndrome". PERIL here stands for five integrated crises that capitalism faces at the current time: crises of profitability, ecology, resources, imperialism, and legitimacy.

This combination of crises suggests that the global capitalist order is now fragile in a way it has not been since the Second World War. Some theorists – like the New Zealand socialist Grant Morgan or the Russian-American Dmitry Orlov – have gone as far as to argue that global capitalism is doomed to collapse within a few decades.

However, ecosocialism doesn't necessarily hold to this apocalyptic

scenario. Whether globalised capitalism is sustainable – and what social order or orders might replace it – is a question which has an objective as well as a subjective factor. The crises mean that the global order must change and compensate – but the balance of class forces will determine exactly how that comes about. Building a fightback against capitalism is vital to ensure that the 99% don't end up paying for the destruction caused by the 1%.

Actually existing ecosocialism

I want to finish by looking at the countries where ecosocialism is being put into practice – Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba.

Following the election of Evo Morales to the presidency of Bolivia in 2005, a new constitution was drafted and adopted in 2009. It was the first constitution in the world to include environmental and socialist principles. In 2010, the government of Bolivia hosted the World People's Conference on Climate Change in the city of Cochabamba. It was attended by around 30,000 people from 6 continents.

In December 2010, the Bolivian parliament passed the Law on the Rights of Mother Earth, in which Mother Earth (or Pachamama, in indigenous Andean cultures) is defined as "...the dynamic living system formed by the indivisible community of all life systems and living beings whom are interrelated, interdependent, and complementary, which share a common destiny"; adding that "Mother Earth is considered sacred in the worldview of Indigenous peoples and nations." It is the first piece of legislation in which the Earth is given a legal identity.

Speaking at the December 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, the late Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela, said: "If the climate were one of the biggest capitalist banks, the rich governments would have saved it." Under the leadership of Chávez, the Venezuelan government took a number of important environmental steps, including the provision at no cost of energy-efficient light bulbs to

all households, and using oil revenue to massively expand the rail system in Caracas. Another important green initiative was Misión Arbol, which in 2007 aimed to collect in five years 30 tons of seeds, plant 100 million plants, and reforest 150,000 hectares of land. When I went to Venezuela in 2011 as part of a solidarity tour, we visited a large organic city farm in the centre of Caracas that is situated on the former carpark of the Hilton Hotel.

In April this year, Chávez's successor as president, Nicolas Maduro, announced additional funding of Bs40m (around \$A6.75m) for Mission Arbol to continue its work, and a new education program, named the "Hugo Chávez National School of Ecosocialist Leaders", will teach volunteers how to better care for the environment.

In the Worldwide Fund for Nature's 2007 report, Cuba was the only country listed as having an ecologically sustainable economy. Cuba was faced with a crisis in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union deprived it of its oil supplies. According to Cuban permaculturist Roberto Perez, "We needed to live as best as possible with less energy and resources. We learned to do a lot of things with almost nothing."

Food production was transformed to a low-input and environmentally friendly system which included organic farming, urban agriculture and permaculture. Industries that were not energy efficient were dismantled; workers in those industries were moved to other sectors or paid their previous salary to study. In parts of the country energy was produced from bagasse, the biomass left after the processing of sugar cane. Even after the Venezuelan revolution provided Cuba with reasonably priced oil, the commitment to a sustainable energy policy continues.

I am not claiming that things are perfect in those countries. But if these small countries, still suffering from the effects of colonialism and exploitation, can achieve these things, imagine what could be achieved in the so-called advanced countries if the same commitment by governments existed. What these countries have in common is a system that puts people and planet before profit.

Bolivia:

People's Climate Summit demands social change to save life

Reprinted from Green Left Weekly (Australia), compiled from content originally published on TelesurTV.Net (a Latin American multimedia platform oriented to lead and promote the unification of the peoples of the South).

"For now, we are discussing a problem left to us by capitalism - climate change." This was the conclusion of Bolivian President Evo Morales in his closing remarks to the October 10-12 World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Defence of Life in Cochabamba.

More than 5000 people from more than 40 countries took part in the summit, established to give a voice to the poor and marginalised victims of climate change. Proposals and demands agreed on at the summit will be taken directly to the United Nations climate talks in Paris starting on November 30.

Morales used his closing speech on October 12 to remind Latin Americans that they have a responsibility to continue to fight against imperialism, colonialism and capitalism.

The country's first indigenous leader was speaking on the Day of Indigenous Resistance - as "Columbus Day" is known in Bolivia. He declared that more than 500 years after Spanish colonial conquest, Bolivia was free from imperialism.

"We have liberated ourselves from imperial domination and neoliberal politics," he said.

He said that Bolivia has recovered control over its resources thanks to the power of social movements, but the United States was planning invade other countries to "rob their economy" and "loot their natural resources".

Morales said that "new generations, out of principle for life and humanity, have to be anti-imperialist".

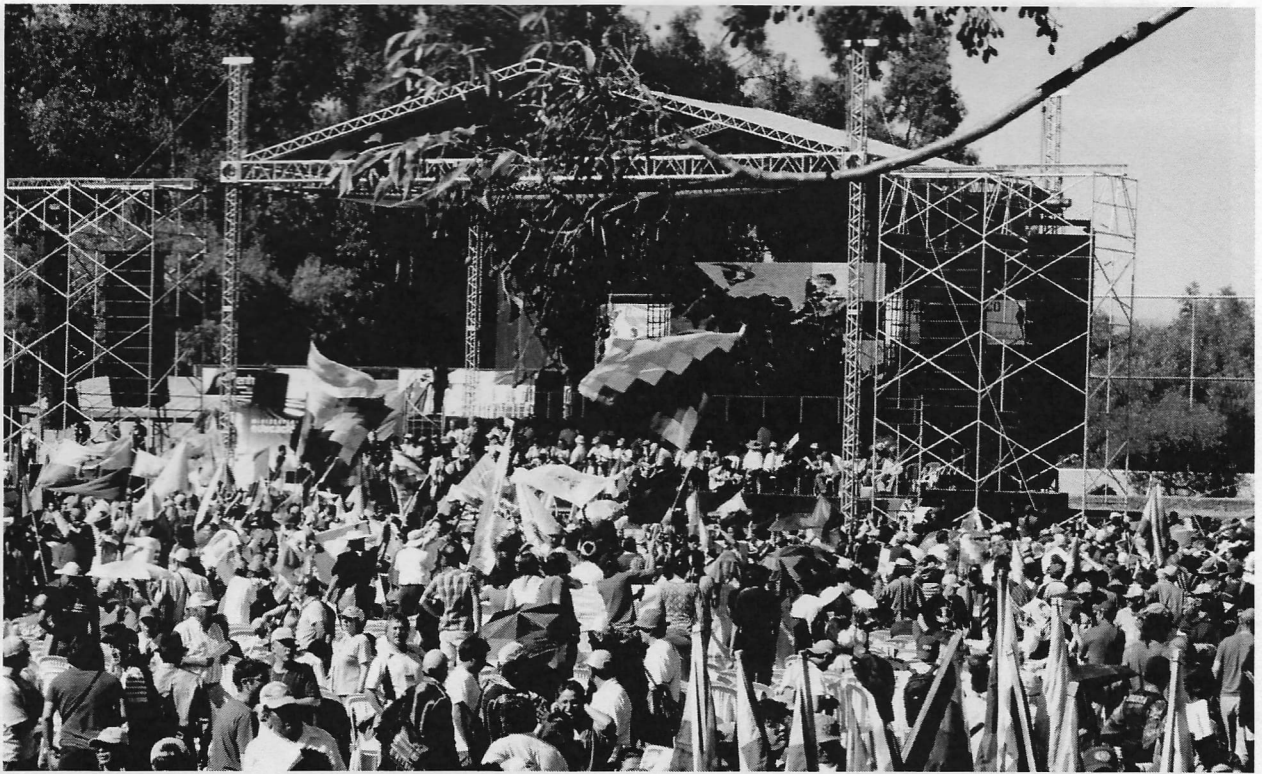
Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro also addressed the summit that day, calling on the people of the world to take a stand at the upcoming climate change talks in Paris to pressure world leaders to take decisive action.

"Only the people will save the planet, we cannot trust in the oligarchy or the International Monetary Fund," Maduro said.

"May the voice of the people be heard in Paris," the Venezuelan leader insisted to loud cheers and applause from the large crowd.

Maduro warned that powerful countries would try to take advantage of the climate talks and interest in a so-called green economy to reinforce the international system that condemns countries to poverty and underdevelopment.

"Behind the mask there's an even uglier monster. They want to turn the green economy into an instrument to recolonize us," Maduro said.



Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa told the summit there could be no environmental justice without combating economic inequality and making rich countries pay their debt.

Climate justice cannot be achieved until affluent countries compensate poorer countries for the damage they have caused to the environment and end mass contamination.

In his address, the Ecuadorean president said everyone was responsible for protecting the environment, but the bulk of responsibility lies with those wealthy countries who contaminate the most.

"A rich citizen emits 38 times more CO₂ emissions than his poor counterpart," Correa said.

He added that the most important solution to global warming is environmental justice, which would require the "largest contaminators to compensate those countries most affected by climate change".

Correa concluded that environmental justice is a "political struggle", rooted in combating global inequality.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also spoke, saying: "Droughts. Fires. Floods. Landslides. Glaciers melting. Oceans turning to acid. Mother Earth is giving us a warning. We must listen. And we must act."

Morales presented the UN head with a 10-point plan to defend Mother Earth to be discussed at the Paris summit.

One of the Bolivian proposals is to create an Environmental International Court of Justice "to make it easier for countries to fulfill their international commitments to climate change".

France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, one of the few representatives from a Western government at the summit, conceded: "Industrialised countries have a particular responsibility" when it comes to climate change. He urged attendees to "engage and show what direction the governments should follow" in their efforts to tackle the problem.

Bolivia's ambassador to the UN, Diego Parry, told TeleSUR English he plans on presenting the summit's views at the Paris meeting. "We want to hear the voice and the words of the people on

climate change," he said, "and to hear their proposals for discussion at the Paris summit in December."

The main focus of the summit was to give grassroots activists and other ordinary people in the developing world a say on how future policy should be shaped.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index, in the past 25 years, about 95% of fatalities from natural disasters have occurred in developing countries. The rate of such disasters is expected to rise as the effects of climate change worsen.

At the conference, attendees heard that if the temperature of the planet rose by 2 degrees celsius, then an environmental catastrophe will be unavoidable. As well as natural disasters, large numbers of people would starve. For every 1 degree rise in global temperatures, grain yields are expected to fall by 5%.

Indigenous people from all across Bolivia arrived in Cochabamba with one simple message. "We just want to protect our beloved Mother Earth," one delegate told TeleSUR english.

Germany:

Fighting Europe's biggest hole

By Jojo, a Fightback correspondent based in Germany.

When the Conference of Parties (COP15) took place in Copenhagen in 2009, the mobilisation of the climate movement focused mainly on appealing to the governments meeting there to stop climate change. Since these governments were obviously not questioning capitalism and economic growth and were all putting their own interests first, this strategy had to fail. And it will fail again in Paris this December, when some NGOs will try to lobby the participants of this COP to find a solution to climate change. However, the more radical majority of the climate movement changed its strategy after Copenhagen and decided to fight climate change directly at its roots; for example, in the lignite field in the Rhineland between Cologne and Aachen in Germany.

This area is the biggest producer of CO2 in Europe. It has three open cast mines, one of them the size of the city centre of Cologne, as well as its own railways and several power plants. Besides producing massive amounts of greenhouse gas, it also pollutes the region with dust that is partly radio-active due to uranium in the ground. The mines destroy fertile soil, whole villages whose inhabitants are forced to move away and unique ecosystems. The mines and power plants are operated by RWE, one of the monopolists that control the German energy market.

There has always been resistance by local initiatives, but the climate movement discovered it in 2010 when the first climate camp took place there. Ever since then there has been an

annual camp in the region, combining discussion and workshops with direct actions. In 2011, activists bought a house and established the Workshop for Actions and Alternatives (WAA) as a permanent space. In 2012, the Hambach forest which is home to some endangered species was occupied. This forest was once 6000 hectares large; the remaining 500 hectares are supposed to be cut down in the next few years. The activists built treehouses and a three story house out of wood between the trees. Some months later, the squat was evicted; this took three days, as one activist locked himself in a tunnel under the ground. After the eviction, they set up a camp on a meadow on the edge of the forest that is owned by a supporter. This camp still exists today and, in addition, several places in the forest are squatted with tree houses.

In the meadow, activists live in tents, caravans and self-built clay huts. They have solar panels for energy supply and collect left-overs from vegetable farmers and bakeries for food. "With our struggle in the Hambach forest we are not only fighting an absurd kind of energy production but also this capitalist system", says Yogur, one of the squatters.

The occupation is a method of passive resistance but also a platform to start further actions. The clear cutting works, which RWE can only do in autumn and winter because of bird conservation regulations, are being blockaded and the infrastructure is sabotaged. There have also been blockades of the railway that brings the coal from the mine to the power plant. This year, activists also started going into the mine to occupy (and thus stop) the giant coal diggers

that are around 200m long and almost up to 100m high, and to blockade the conveyor belts. One digger was occupied during the G7 summit and, since many police including their climbing teams were in Bavaria to stop protesters there, the activists couldn't be evicted and the occupation lasted for more than 50 hours.

As these actions are a danger for RWE which is already almost bankrupt, repression is rising. RWE employs private security companies whose workers have beaten up activists on more than a few occasions. Police are working closely together with the security companies and with RWE. Since autumn last year, police have begun taking activists into custody for several weeks. Just some days ago at the time of writing, another activist has been imprisoned.

Nevertheless, the movement is getting bigger. AusgeCO2ht, the group that organises the annual climate camps has formed an alliance with other organisations like the Interventionist Left and NGOs like 350.org to organise a mass action of civil disobedience called "Ende Gelände" ("Here and no further") in August this year during the climate camp. 1500 demonstrators went to enter one of the mines and to stop its operations successfully. The media couldn't ignore this and the vast majority of media coverage was positive – no wonder, as even journalists were attacked by securities and police during the action.

The question however is if co-operation with NGOs might also mark a deradicalisation of the movement that, until now, has had an anti-capitalist (and mostly anti-state) perspective. Some NGOs are distancing themselves from the more militant actions happening



around the Hambach Forest. It is clear that it is important for the rather small movement to grow, but at the same time activists should still stress that climate change can't be stopped within a growth-based capitalist system.

Another important question will be how to gain support or at least understanding of RWE's workers. When the German government planned a very moderate climate fee that owners of power plants with huge pollution should pay, their union, the IG-BCE, started a huge

campaign as they saw their jobs under threat – and successfully stopped the climate fee. It will be hard to fight for a coal exit against the resistance of the workers. So it will be important to fight for conversion into environmental friendly jobs and also for better working conditions in the renewable sector.

When the COP meet in Paris this December, the climate movement will also mobilise there. Most of it will protest on 12 December, at the end of the conference, not to say "please save us

from climate change" but to say "we're not satisfied with your decisions". The motto is "we are the ones we have been waiting for". Until then (and after it as well) we will have to continue fighting climate change at its roots. This year's clear cutting season in the Hambach Forest has just started and at the time of writing, activists are gathering here for a camp to share skills for actions. On the 17th October, they plan to blockade the coal railway once more.

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

CAPITALISM VS. THE CLIMATE

Review:

This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate

By Naomi Klein: Simon & Schuster, 2014

Review by Daphne Lawless (*Fightback*
Auckland / Tāmaki Makarau)

It's quite depressing to note how long the facts have been out there that capitalism is – literally and figuratively – eating up the only planet we have. Scientists were telling US President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 that the emissions of industrial civilisation could dangerously heat the planet, a “greenhouse effect” which NASA scientist James Hansen made a household word with his testimony to the US Congress in 1988.

But even at that stage, it became clear that the mega-corporates who were then beginning the process of neoliberal globalization did not see this as a priority. British comedian Ben Elton's novel *Stark*, which came out in the previous year, envisaged the mega-rich building a spaceship to abandon a doomed planet. Almost 30 years later, all that has happened is that the question has become more urgent, as shown in

the latest book by Canadian activist Naomi Klein.

Klein presents her book as an expose of:

“the power and ideological roadblocks that have so far prevented [technological solutions to climate problems] from taking hold on anything close to the scale required... a shift that challenges not only capitalism, but also the building blocks of materialism that preceded modern capitalism”.

The central argument of Klein's book is not only that climate change is an existential crisis for human civilisation, but that it is also the *key link* for a new movement which can challenge the era of neoliberal globalized capitalism. She argues that, since the end of the slave trade, all subsequent social movements have been defused by granting legal and social demands for equality while increasing economic equality:

“These economic demands... represent nothing less than the unfinished

business of the most powerful liberation movements of the past two centuries... Climate change does not need some shiny new movement... where others failed; climate change can be the force... that will bring together all of these still living movements”.

This review will argue that, in this latest book, Klein's main contribution to the movement is to show clearly that the struggle for social justice and post-capitalist economics goes hand-in-glove with not only the “eco-socialist” programme for a post-extractive economics, but the defence of the traditional rights and resources of Indigenous people. She even touches on feminist issues, given Western culture's history of using metaphors for technological process which suggest the forcible violation of “Mother Nature”.

Sacrifice zones

One of Klein's strengths is in coining pithy phrases to encapsulate vital issues for the movement to grasp. Her previous

books have given us phrases like “disaster capitalism” and “the shock doctrine”; this book gives us not only “extreme extraction”, but “sacrifice zones”. The latter are “places that, to their extractors, somehow don’t count and can therefore be poisoned, drained or otherwise destroyed” – landscapes sacrificed to big energy projects like hydro-dams or open-cast mines, for example.

Crucially, the lifeworlds of ethnic minorities or Indigenous people have also been considered “sacrifice zones” for big energy. We are not only talking about outright genocide and theft to grab Indigenous lands and fisheries, but slower processes of cultural genocide or even literal poisoning – such as the Aamjiwnaang people of southern Canada, who suffered a catastrophic drop in the number of boy babies after petrochemical plants opened on their ancestral land. Though Klein doesn’t go into it, you could argue that the same is true of all working-class communities under capitalism, whose lives are valued less. To give an example, the working-class suburb of Newton in Auckland was dug up almost entirely to build the Central Motorway Junction, its inhabitants exiled to the southern fringe of the urban area.

Klein effectively links “extractivism” – “a non-reciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth” – to the exploitation of not only natural resources, but the exploitation, oppression, enslavement and genocide of various kinds of human being. As she puts it in relation to the Chinese “economic miracle”:

“The same logic that is willing to work labourers to the bone for pennies a day will burn mountains of dirty coal while spending next to nothing on pollution controls... our own corporations... with full participation from China’s autocratic rulers, turned the Pearl River Delta into their carbon-spewing Special Economic Zone, with the goods going straight onto container ships headed for our superstores.”

She gives us the cautionary tale of Nauru, the Pacific island which almost literally ate itself to death. 90% of the island was dug up for its phosphate deposits, sold as fertilizer to rich countries. The country

drove fast cars and ate imported food for decades. When the phosphate ran out, leaving a mostly uninhabitable island, an increasingly panicked government lost most of the resource profits in a real estate scam, set itself up as a tax haven for money laundering, and finally rented itself out as a prison camp for Australia’s barbaric refugee policy.

The main legacy of Nauru’s resource wealth is the highest rate of Type 2 diabetes in the world. As Klein notes, this is a timely warning for left-wing governments in South America such as Venezuela or Bolivia, which are still reliant on fossil fuels. Continuing these exploitative, extractive relationships will both engender corruption in the short term and leave these countries without a long-term future. It also shows the obsolescence of older “productivist” forms of socialist thought which also dreamed of Promethean dominance of nature and electricity too cheap to meter.

Klein also clearly exposes the fraudulent nature of the “emissions trading schemes”, which serve mainly as a means by which Western countries can “export” their emissions to China or India; enriching those countries’ ruling elites while turning the poorer areas into sacrifice zones. The crucial issue is that on these markets, emissions are counted where they are produced and not where the goods produced are consumed, and international transport emissions are not counted at all. This lets Western consumerism off the hook for both the products it buys from polluting industry in the developing countries, and for the coal and other fossil fuels it exports there.

The global economy is increasingly a unity, as is global ecology; pollution and resource exhaustion respect borders no more than capital does. Klein ruthlessly exposes “emissions trading” as a shell-game where responsibility for emissions is simply passed between different capitalist states, and which is rife with fraud; such as “carbon offsets” which means that emissions don’t go down at all, or oil companies in the Nigerian delta demanding carbon credits for *not* pointlessly burning natural gas.

Denial and dimming the sun

Klein goes into the belly of the beast, not only to show the impact of global climate change on ordinary people’s lives, but to show the extent that the ruling classes are engaged in deep-down denial of it. She explains:

“We have not done the things that are necessary to lower emissions because those things fundamentally conflict with deregulated capitalism... The actions that would give us the best chance of averting catastrophe... are extremely threatening to an elite minority that has a stranglehold over our economy, our political process, and most of our major media outlets.”

In her first chapter, she braves a conference of the climate-denying Heartland Institute, where “talking points [are] tested [which] will jam the comment sections beneath every article and YouTube video”. In an echo of Cameron Slater’s “Dirty Politics”, Klein explains the climate deniers’ message not to just twist the argument, but to destroy discourse altogether:

“the goal was never just to spread doubt but to spread fear – to send a clear message that saying anything at all about climate change was a sure-fire way to find your inbox and comment threads jammed with a toxic strain of vitriol.”

The Heartlanders, Klein argues, “did not become engaged with climate issues because they found flaws in the scientific facts. Rather, they became alarmed about the economic and political implications of those facts and set out to disprove them.” Paradoxically, Klein argues, the Heartlanders are precisely right in their linking of climate disaster with capitalist freedom itself – whereas there the mainstream green movement, with its neither left-nor-right slogan, has been in denial.

Another form of denial is “magical thinking” – admitting that climate change is a real problem, but believing in technological fixes which will make everything okay without requiring any sacrifice from the privileged. A conference on “geoengineering” at Chichester Hall in England has rich

...such as Bill Gates listening intently as excited scientists talk up their projects for "safe" nuclear power, simulated volcanic explosions or giant mirrors to literally block out the sun.

This may sound like a plot line from an old *Simpsons* episode – or, when they start talking about orbital colonies or Martian terraforming, the plotline of Elton's *Stark* come to life. But it proves that fiction, if anything, underestimates the depravity of the global ruling class, and their irrational belief that "inconvenient truths" such as climate change can be simply ignored out of existence. As Klein puts it:

"It is always easier to deny reality than to allow our worldview to be shattered, a fact that was as true of die-hard Stalinists at the time of the purges as it is of libertarian climate deniers today...For the fossil fuel companies and their paid champions, anything is preferable to regulating ExxonMobil, including attempting to regulate the sun."

Klein points out again and again that it is the neoliberal free trade agenda – and even capitalism's logic of endless growth itself, which predates the neoliberal/globalized era – which is simply incompatible with the kind of serious action which is now necessary. There is no argument against state intervention in the economy if it is a question of the very habitability of the planet, which runs counter to 40 years of neoliberal reforms. And so the corporate denialists, according to Klein, want:

"not action to prevent climate chaos but rather policies that would safeguard or even increase their profits no matter the weather... Their dominance-based worldview provides them with the intellectual tools to write off huge swathes of humanity, and indeed, to rationalise profiting from the meltdown."

Even when individual billionaires are convinced by the case for climate action – such as Richard Branson, who made a big deal out of "Gaia Capitalism" – when they come up against the logic of the market and profit maximisation, these ideals are put aside as too difficult. Branson offered a \$25 million prize to

anyone who could develop sustainable sources of jet fuel; but he never considered for a moment that actually cutting back the expansion of Virgin Air's services might be an option.

Big Green

It's not just the big corporates in denial. Our habit of making black humour about impending signs of the apocalypse, Klein argues, is another "way of looking away", as is a kind of defensive misanthropy:

"Somewhere within each of us dwells a belief in [neoliberalism]'s – that we are nothing but selfish, greedy, self-gratification machines... convinc[ing] us that we are not just incapable of self-preservation but fundamentally not worth saving."

Another is the middle-class urban liberal lifestyle option:

"Meditate and shop at farmer's markets and stop driving – but forget trying to actually change the systems that are making the crisis inevitable... many of these lifestyle changes are indeed part of the solution, but we still have one eye tightly shut."

Klein is bitingly precise that "dropping out and planting vegetables is not an option for this generation. The fossil fuels runaway train is coming for us one way or another."

Other reviewers have suggested that *This Changes Everything* is not going to win any new converts to the climate movement. Klein is upfront that she blames 30 years of inaction in large part on the mainstream of the climate movement itself, and its attempts to disguise the essential conflict between capitalist economics and climate science. Her real ideological battle is against what she calls "Big Green" – the kind of people who surrendered to the neoliberal ideological offensive, who argue that "market logic and ecological limits" can be reconciled, who wish to "coddle conservatives" by appealing to patriotism or big-ticket technological solutions. These people, she suggests, do not realise the

"direct and compelling relationship between the dominance of the values that are intimately tied to triumphant capitalism and ... anti-environment views and behaviours".

One biting section of her book discusses the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), one of the biggest milestones in the early neoliberal era. She points out that something like 80% of the US environmental movement of the time was won over to support this agreement, being fobbed off with toothless side-agreements. This may be one of the reasons why "Big Green" prefers not to draw attention to its complicity setting up the very neoliberal regime which allows big powers to sabotage one another's renewable energy schemes by appealing to the various trade courts. Another may be that Al Gore, now among the biggest players in Big Green, was the US Vice-President who presided over NAFTA's enactment.

Most shockingly, Big Green goes along with the logic of "sacrifice zones" (and thus lesser classes of human being) by supporting the alienation of Indigenous lands to create "carbon sinks" from which Indigenous people's traditional activities are excluded. Klein describes these "green human rights abuses" as "a cost-benefit analysis that it's easier to cordon off a forest inhabited by politically weak people in a poor country than to stop politically powerful corporate emitters in rich countries." It's no coincidence that the dimming-the-sun projects of the geo-engineers would probably cause massive droughts in Africa and southern India, to save the Global North's climate.

Klein's argument that "less consumption", rather than simply "green consumption" – reversing the consumption boom of the 1980s provoked by the first wave of neoliberal globalisation – is simply necessary is, therefore, also completely counter to the logic of the market economy. The Values Party, New Zealand's pioneering green party of the 1970s, called for Zero Economic Growth; but this would mean nothing but recession and misery for ordinary people under a capitalist economy. Klein shows that the only time that emissions have ever gone down under industrial capitalism is during severe recessions; even the massive collapse of the post-Stalinist economies only brought emissions down by 5%, less than the 8% which science suggests we need year on year even to slow global warming down.

But still our rulers appear to have learned nothing, with the US having made sure that even lip service to climate realities was taken out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA). Klein convincingly makes the case that as long as market liberalism is the consensus of both Big Green and the globe's power élites, the necessary action is simply inconceivable. As she herself points out: "when climate deniers argue that global warming is a plot to redistribute wealth, it's not (only) because they are paranoid. It's because they've been paying attention."

Indigenous lead the way

Klein gives a great account of what *must* happen to protect a future for human civilisation – selective degrowth; reversing privatisation of electricity and water; an expansion of public, non-profit and caregiving economies; a shift from industrial agriculture to "agroecology" worldwide; and an end to "shitty jobs" made possible by a Universal Basic Income. But can we get there from here?

Part of her answer is found in the chapters she devotes to the pivotal role played by Indigenous peoples in climate struggle. She explains how – particularly in North and South America – Indigenous people have been spurred into combatting "extreme extraction" (open cast mining, fracking, new coal ports) by the imperatives of defending their traditional lands and fisheries. One example of this happening in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been the opposition by Northland Māori to the Norwegian state-owned oil company, Statoil, exploring the Cape Reinga basin.

This is made all the more vital by the fact that, once fossil fuels get a foothold in a particular area, they wreck the local lifeworld to the point where other ways of living become impossible. Areas based on fossil fuel economies, as Klein puts it, are "the ultimate in rootlessness" – Wild West-type situations, like the mining industry in Australia, where people only go to earn enough money to get out of there, and whose hyper-masculine culture encourages a massive sex-work industry.

Crucially, she also argues that globalization has meant that the entire

planet has become a "sacrifice zone". Fracking, for example, has spread to the rich countries of Western Europe. Significantly, when previously privileged communities find the lifeworlds threatened by extractivism, they too can rise in revolt, and even stand in solidarity with the oppressed. For example, when the Mi'kmaq people of eastern Canada first stood up for their historic fisheries 15 years ago, there was a huge racist backlash among white fishermen. But now, Mi'kmaq and white people stand together against Texan companies attempting to frack their water sources.

Similarly, when frackers came to the south of France, whose inhabitants prize themselves on their climate and the individuality and uniqueness of their local food products, the resulting outcry managed to have fracking banned in the entire country. And the privileged people of Auckland's inner-eastern suburbs were able to stop the Eastern Motorway project of 2004 (and unseat right-wing mayor John Banks) where the people of Newton failed.

Klein has the essential insight that the climate struggle is a class struggle, as shown in her analysis of Heartland Institute propaganda:

"Even climate action at home looks suspiciously like socialism to them; all the calls for high-density affordable housing and brand-new public transit are obviously just ways to give backdoor subsidies to the undeserving poor."

Unfortunately, she doesn't expand on the question of how exactly the "undeserving poor" who don't happen to be living on top of carbon bombs, or in picturesque places which might gain the sympathy of the privileged classes, can fight back.

Bad timing?

Klein argues that the climate movement suffered from "bad timing" – that it was unfortunate that climate change became an issue at the same time as the fall of the USSR and its satellite states. Klein argues that "right wing ideologues in Washington seized on this moment of global flux to crush all political competition". Her argument seems to be that the struggle has to be an *ideological* one above all.

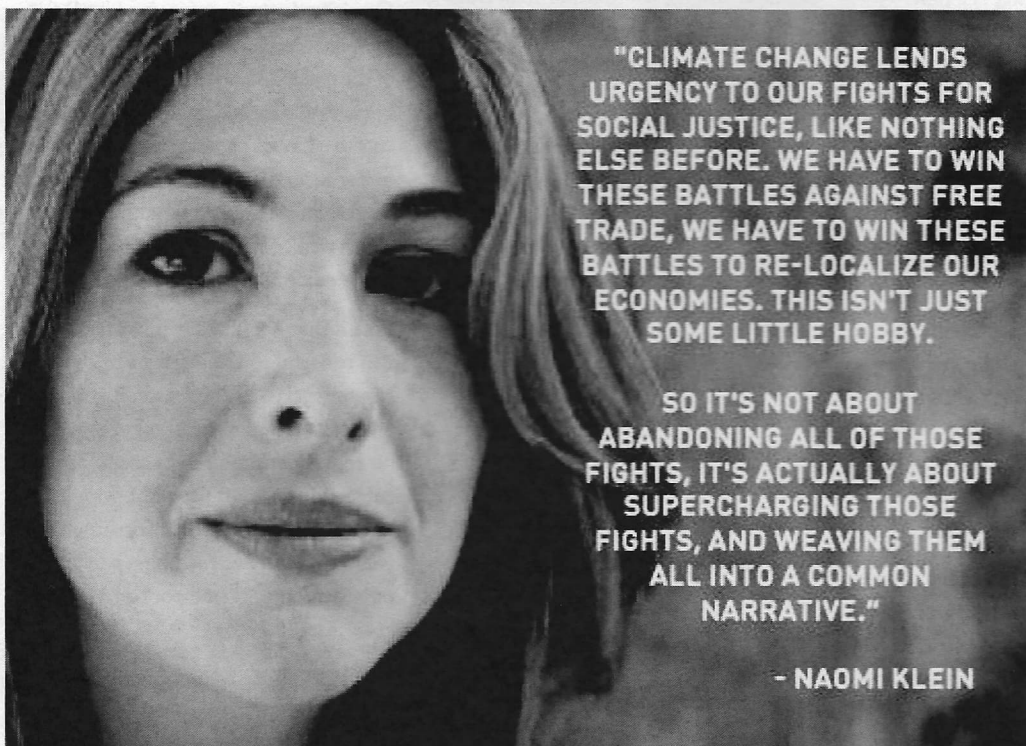
She argues repeatedly for the decisive role of "right-wing think-tanks", first in establishing the overwhelming neoliberal consensus of the 1990s, and since then in defending it against the urgent needs of the planet's climate.

But neoliberalism – with its "Three Pillars" that Klein lists of privatisation, deregulation and low taxes – wasn't simply a policy choice. It was a policy response to restore capitalist profits after the 1970s oil crisis. Crucially, the main reason the USSR fell (despite its even more extreme despoliation of the environment) was because the bureaucratic Stalinist system had no similar way to cut costs and increase consumption of its products. China, however, is proof that Stalinist bureaucratic authoritarianism works well with neoliberal, consumerist market economics.

Given that neoliberalism won because it was useful to the interests of the capitalist classes, the reason it still exists – and still strangles the climate movement – is that it continues to be useful to our rulers. Simply put, the right-wing think-tanks like the Heartland Institute which Klein identifies as the bogeypersons poisoning the "meme pool" are tools of class interest.

This ties in, interestingly, with the recent movement in Aotearoa/NZ to create a "left-wing think tank". But an ideological struggle in isolation is doomed to failure; even a political one will be easily side-tracked. At the basis of ideological and political struggle has to be a basis in a new economic power – and where will that come from? The growing importance of the developing world might be part of this, particularly in the sense of challenging the stranglehold of various trade agreements, and demands for reparation for the "climate debt" of the Global North.

Klein is at her most convincing when she talks about the power of indigenous people protecting their treaty rights, as "many of the planet's largest and most dangerous unexploded carbon bombs lie beneath lands and waters to which Indigenous peoples have legitimate legal claims". She's absolutely right that white radicals who encourage Indigenous people to resist the temptations of selling out their lands and fisheries



to fossil-fuel corporates must suggest and even create feasible economic alternatives by which those peoples can improve their lot in life.

But what counter-power and alternative economy is available to the urban working masses? The last paragraph in her book promotes Greece's SYRIZA party as a source of hope, after the disappointment of the Obama administration. But just like Obama, but when it gained power, SYRIZA quickly buckled under to the demands of finance capital, since there was no other alternative available within "the system".

Conclusion

This Changes Everything makes it clear that the titans of the global economy are not only stunningly uninterested in

the supposedly global issue of ecological sustainability, but are gambling that when the disaster hits, it won't hit them:

"Those involved feel free to engage in these high-stakes gambles because they believe that they and theirs will be protected from the ravages in question, at least for another generation or so." Klein's no-holds-barred exposé shows that Ben Elton's vision of the mega-rich abandoning the planet (and the majority of its people) to its fate is all too plausible.

Her precise process for building an ideological, cultural and political movement which can overcome global capitalism and save the ecology can be critiqued as somewhat incomplete – concentrating on the Indigenous people and developing nations of the periphery, rather than the working masses of the urban core. But

her clarity that climate change is not the *only* issue for the social issue, but the *key* issue which opens the door to all the other issues, is absolutely vital.

Particularly in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the need for the tauiwi social justice movements to take Māori struggles and Māori ways of knowing seriously is vitally urgent. Klein shows that there is no socialist or post-capitalist future which is not ecologically sustainable and which does not have indigenous struggle at its heart. The alternative is "climate-fuelled disaster capitalism". We need to build a future which is not only resilient, but regenerative:

"Resilience – though certainly one of nature's gifts, is a passive process, implying the ability to absorb blows and get back up. Regeneration, on the other hand, is active."

Change Everything:

Climate Justice post-Paris

By Michelle Ducat, Oil Free Wellington.

Oil Free Wellington started in late 2012 when the government announced the granting of a permit to Texas-based oil giant Anadarko to prospect for oil off Wellington's coast in the Pegasus Basin. Anadarko had a 25% working interest in BP's Deep Water Horizon rig, which exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, killing eleven and causing huge environmental devastation. Since then, we have campaigned in Wellington to draw attention to the Block Offer process and granting of licenses to Anadarko, Statoil and Chevron. We have held marches, public talks and film screenings, run email, letter and social media campaigns, dropped banners, and protested on the water, at times using direct action to directly resist the expansion of fossil fuel extraction. Increasingly, we have made climate change and climate justice central to our demands.

Many of OFW's initial members came from a climate justice group that formed after the Camp for Climate Action Aotearoa in 2009, inspired by similar camps in Europe. Climate Camp was held towards the end of the Copenhagen climate talks, and was explicit in its criticism of the whole 'COP'(Conference of Parties – the UN climate talks) process: if governments wouldn't address the systemic causes of climate change – the economic system that put profits over the planet – it was up to the people to create the solutions and movement to get that system change. This required acknowledging that those who are most vulnerable to the threat of climate change are those who have contributed least to it. The camp culminated in a day of action targeting the stock exchange. The stock exchange represented the root causes of climate change – and how carbon trading allowed businesses to benefit from climate change. Ten people were arrested for blockading the building.

Many environmental groups had held high hopes for Copenhagen to create

a binding ambitious agreement. The talks were chaotic and marred by the exclusion of civil society. There was a last minute deal brokered by just five of the countries – US, China, South Africa, Brazil and India – which recognised the scientific case for keeping temperatures to no more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, but made no binding commitments. Vulnerable nations were deeply disappointed that the 1.5 degree target was dropped, guaranteeing their disappearance as sea levels rise.

So, eight years later we find ourselves at the eve of another "last, best, chance" – COP 21 in Paris – where once again governments will try to get a legally binding agreement to "prevent dangerous interference with the climate system". The science has become ever clearer – and the latest IPCC report in 2014 has introduced the concept of a climate budget: to keep a 66% chance of keeping warming under 2 degrees we can put maybe an additional 270 billion tonnes of carbon in the atmosphere. We already emit 10 billion tonnes a year. This means we can only use between 1/5 and 1/3 of the existing oil, gas and coal reserves.

Already, the latest iteration of the proposed Paris documents are pointing to a lack of ambition and a lack of focus on the root causes: the long term target and process are still up for negotiation; they barely mention fossil fuels – just mentioning an end to fossil fuel subsidies; there is no mention now of human rights, rights to Mother Earth, civil society, health, gender equity, a just transition for workers, and a Climate Justice tribunal; there is an acknowledgement of loss and damages by vulnerable nations – but with no mention of specific commitments.

And although the draft agreement suggests there could be reviews to make these more ambitious, the current tally of voluntary emissions reduction targets – the INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) guarantee a huge overshoot of the 2 degree target.

And it's not only a lack of ambition that make the UN talks, or what some have dubbed the 'Conference of Polluters', a failure – it is the whole framework of market based mechanisms and carbon accounting it has adopted as 'solutions'. New markets are being created which do little to nothing to help prevent climate change, but do help Government's appear to be doing something, and help create new profit.

The REDD+ scheme, born out of these negotiations, is basically a new industry where people can be paid for not chopping or burning down forests. In some cases, such as in Mexico and Brazil, indigenous peoples who make their livelihoods and also live off the resources in these forests, sustainably, are having their access to their lands cut off as these forests are affectively privatized for the new carbon economy. Not only this, but rich countries get to buy credits from this programme to allow them to keep emitting. And this is just one example of such a project, there are many; and while even many environmental NGOs accept these solutions, resistance to them is being led by indigenous groups, peasant farmers like the group La Via Campesina, and women of the global south.

Given vested interests in the current economic system, Paris will fail. But we can find power and solutions elsewhere and we believe that's where we should put our collective energy.

In this context Oil Free Wellington has decided to organize two events to strengthen what has been working to address climate change: local grassroots resistance to fossil fuels and the growth of a climate justice approach that makes links across progressive movements. For instance local people have been successfully resisting fossil fuel expansion in the US – stopping hundreds of new coal-fired plants; in Canada – delaying pipeline construction; and in South America where indigenous peoples are resisting fossil fuel expansion into forests.

Specifically we want to deepen understanding of the structural causes of climate change and the big picture solutions; make stronger links between diverse groups; and build capacity for and commitment to direct action.

Change Everything will take place on the weekend of the 12th and 13th December, at the end of the Paris talks. The gathering on the Saturday will involve plenary sessions on capitalism, colonialism and the climate, as well as peoples' solutions to climate change. The afternoon will involve participatory workshops exploring radical solutions in more depth. Registration will go live at the start of November.

On December 13th we take action. We will take to the water for Wellington's largest ever on-water demonstration and practice blockade for resistance to fossil

fuels this Summer. At this point no one knows for sure when the oil industry will show up this Summer but it is likely they will again, for surveying off Wellington's coast.

We'll have a large number of kayaks and paddleboards available for people to use and action on the land too.

Regardless of what is agreed to, it will be more important than ever that we empower each other to work for climate justice from the ground up. Let's look elsewhere for power and action, let's look within and across our communities and struggles.

If you have your own water-going vessel, be it a kayak, paddleboard, yacht, jet ski, barge, speedboat or pirate raft, bring it along. Email us at oilfreewellington@gmail.com to let us know you can bring your own vessel. We'll need other help on the day too so let us know if you

want to help out. We have successfully crowd-funded the costs of boat hire using GiveALittle.co.nz.

We're interested in forging new relationships and networks with others wanting to work towards climate justice with a critique of capitalism and false solutions, and in a way that empowers communities and builds resilience. Get in touch.

<http://oilfreewellington.org.nz>

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Poem:

Cassandra warns of climate change

For my discomfoting prophecies
I was harried past all asylum
to the very limits of discomfiture
by those whom I had told out of love
to do otherwise than trace headlong paths
past the rubicon of my wretched vision.

They saw to it I was silenced
and all memory of me effaced
beyond recognition.

Now, when children point at me,
questioningly, in the street,
they are bustled off by their guardians
at double pace
who readily assure them
that I am a nobody,
that I am, in fact, illusory –
a nameless, voiceless,
trick of the light:

as with the spectacular
pink and gold plasma
of a sunset seen through smog.

Tam Vosper lives in Christchurch and is currently working on his Master of Arts (in English) at the University of Canterbury. He also, among sundry other distractions, reads and writes poems.

Why you should get involved in Fightback

10 Point Programme

1. Constitutional transformation based on Tino Rangatiratanga, Mana Motuhake and workers power. Tangata whenua and community co-ops to operate as kaitiaki over public resources.
2. Secure jobs for all who are ready to work, with a living wage and a shorter working week.
3. The benefit system to be replaced with a universal basic income.
4. Full rights for migrant workers.
5. Opposition to all imperialist intervention and alliances, including New Zealand state's participation in military occupations and the Five Eyes agreement.
6. No revolution without women's liberation. Full funding for sexual violence prevention and survivor support, free access to all reproductive technologies. For socialist-feminist solutions to the marginalisation of all gender minorities, within the movement and in society.
7. For an ecosocialist solution to climate change. End fossil fuel extraction, expand green technology and public transport.
8. For freedom of technology and information. Expansion of affordable broadband internet to the whole country. An end to Government spying on our own citizens and on others. End corporate copyright policies in favour of creative commons centred on producers and users.
9. Abolish prisons, replace with restorative justice and rehabilitation.
10. Free health-care and education at every level, run by those directly affected. In healthcare; remove inequities in accident compensation, move towards health system based on informed consent, opposition to "top-down" efforts to change working people's behaviour. In education; full public funding for all forms of education and research, enshrining education in te tiriti and te reo.

Contact

Auckland

Daphne

027 220-9552

daphne@randomstatic.net

Wellington

Ian Anderson

022 385 8682

ian.ndrsn@gmail.com

Christchurch

Thomas Roud

021 155 3896

thomas.roud@gmail.com